Central American
NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.
Editor: Michael P. Birks, 36 Trevor Road, Flixton, URMSTON, Manchester M41 5QH. England. 0161-747 5924.

Vol.IV, No.67 April 1997

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The **Central American Group** is a part of the **Spanish Main Philatelic Society,** the leading Society in the world for collectors of Latin America. The journal of the SMPS is *The Mainsheet*, published quarterly, and is free with your subscription. The Secretary is Brian Moorhouse, PO Box 105, PETERBOROUGH PE3 8TQ, England. Phone 01733 2687078. The subscription is currently £8 in Europe or $20 elsewhere. Cheques in sterling of US$ should be made payable to "The Spanish Main". A three year subscription of £21/$54 and a five year subscription of £30/$80 are available and payment for these longer subscriptions may be made by Access, Mastercard or Visa. The minimum subscription is one year. If joining during the course of the year the appropriate part subscriptions should be added - Feb-Apr £6/$15; May-Aug £4/$10; Sep-Nov £2/$5 to pay through to the following January when the subscription paid will come into effect.

The **Central American Group** caters for the collectors of Mexico to Panama. Its journal, which you are now reading, is published quarterly, and is available by annual subscription. The subscription is currently £6/$11 resident in the UK or in Europe, or £8/$15 elsewhere. The minimum subscription is one year. If joining after June 1st, add 50% to pay through to the following January when the subscription paid will come into effect. Cheques in sterling payable to "The CA Group" should be sent to the treasurer, David Hankey, 2 Prince's Drive, Marple, STOCKPORT SK6 6NJ, England. Phone 0161-449 0693. We shall be pleased to forward the relevant portions of multi-subscription cheques to the SMPS or the Chile Group.

We regret we cannot accept dollar cheques for subscriptions because each cheque costs £5/$8 to negotiate.

Back issues are available to members at 75p/$1.50 each, although Volumes 1 and 2 can be purchased for £10/$20 each, complete, inclusive of postage. Non-members may request a sample copy for 75p/$1.50 post paid. Requests for back issues should be sent the the Editor, to whom cheques should be made payable. Undated dollar cheques are acceptable for this service.

The group leader is Richard Saundry, Gwrych Cottage, Godstone Road, Bletchingley, REDHILL RH1 4PL, Surrey, England. Phone 01883 742186.

The group does not run a packet. The SMPS Packet Secretary is Brian Sylvester, 3 Russell Court, St Lukes Road, MAIDENHEAD SL6 7AP Berkshire, England. Phone 01628 784555.

Although most packets are of a general nature, there are occasional specialised one country packets. Good and unusual material is always wanted.

Owing to insurance difficulties, the packet is not available to overseas members, although we shall be pleased to accept material for inclusion from them.

The auctioneer of the SMPS is Brian Moorhouse, to whom Auction and Private Treaty lots should be sent. Brian is a dealer, and will include your name on his mailing list if requested to do so.

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Vol.IV, No.67 **April 1997**

EDITORIAL

John Fosbery RDP FRPSL

25 years ago John Fosbery founded the Spanish Main Philatelic Society, and its journal *The Mainsheet* first appeared. From that beginning the Society has grown from strength to strength and produced two active groups. The first, of which you are a member, was founded eight years later, and the Chile group shortly after that. The initial objective was 400 members and so the venture can be deemed a great success.

On a personal note I would like to extend my congratulations to John on his achievement and my personal thanks for all the help and encouragement that I have received over the years.

Plans are well in advance for our second appearance at MIDPEX in June and we hope that as many as possible of you will try to attend to see the displays. As a Latin collector I spent a lot of time looking at the displays of *other* groups and an immense amount of pleasure was thus obtained. too often we get totally absorbed in what we do and forget that there is a philatelic world our there. Do try and attend, enjoy the displays and good luck with the dealers who know you are coming and will be prepared.

Finally another plea for copy. You will have noticed that over the past few issues some of my own articles have appeared. This is a bad sign. If you have anything for publication I would be pleased to receive it soon.

mpb

For the diary:- **Saturday 17 May 1997, & Saturday 15 November 1997**
Spanish Main auction with Brian Moorhouse commencing
1.00 p.m. prompt, viewing in the morning, finished by 4.30 p.m..
The Station Hotel (next to the railway station), Peterborough

Saturday 28 June 1997 *MIDPEX*
Midland Sports Centre for the Disabled, Tile Hill, Coventry.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL "A.R." SYSTEM IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Part 3

by Richard H Saundry.

UPU regulations require foreign postal tariffs to accord with the value of the local currency expressed in gold centimes. There was little inflationary pressure on the currencies used in Central America at the end of the nineteenth century, and as a rough guide the foreign postage rates for all these countries on joining the UPU was set at 10 centavos in local currency per 15g weight steps, 10 centavos for registration, with a further 5 centavos for the supplementary "A.R." service.

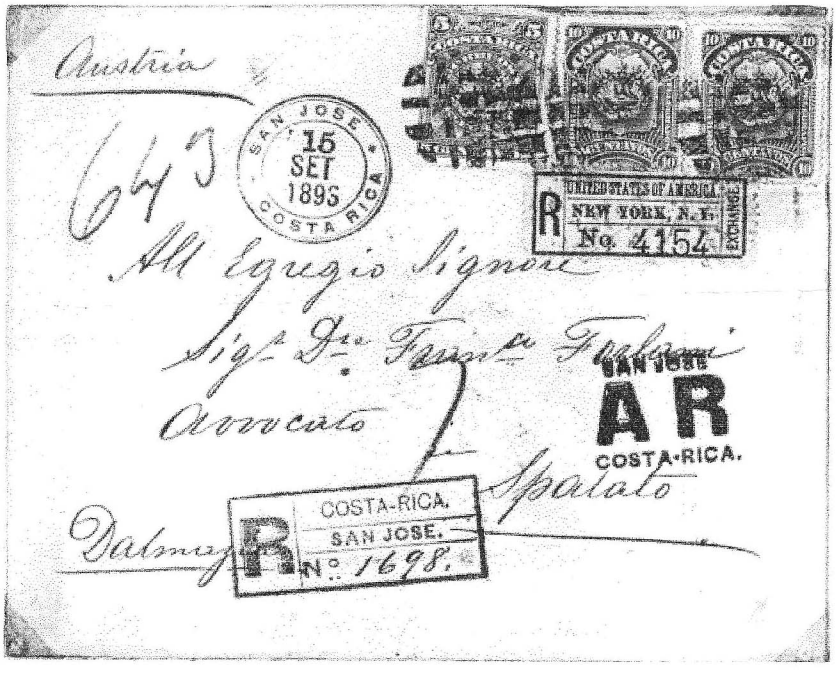


Figure 8.

Thus a Costa Rican cover (Fig. 8) sent in 1895 to Split in what is now modern Croatia, but which then was in the Austro Hungarian Empire, is clearly identified as being an "A.R." registered cover through use of the appropriate handstamp, and the total franking of 25 centavos is consistent with the expected postal tariff.

At this period Costa Rica charged an extra 5 centavos for supplementary "A.R." service, and there are many examples of ordinary registered covers rated at 20 centavos. Clearly in the late 1890's Costa Rica abided by the UPU recommendations and distinguished their "A.R." covers with the requisite postmark. Before 1895, however, and after 1900 until c.1918, the use of these specific handstamps on Costa Rican letters seem not to have been used and it is only through close inspection of postal rates that modern collectors of such covers have the means of distinguishing between "A.R." and non-"A.R." registered covers.

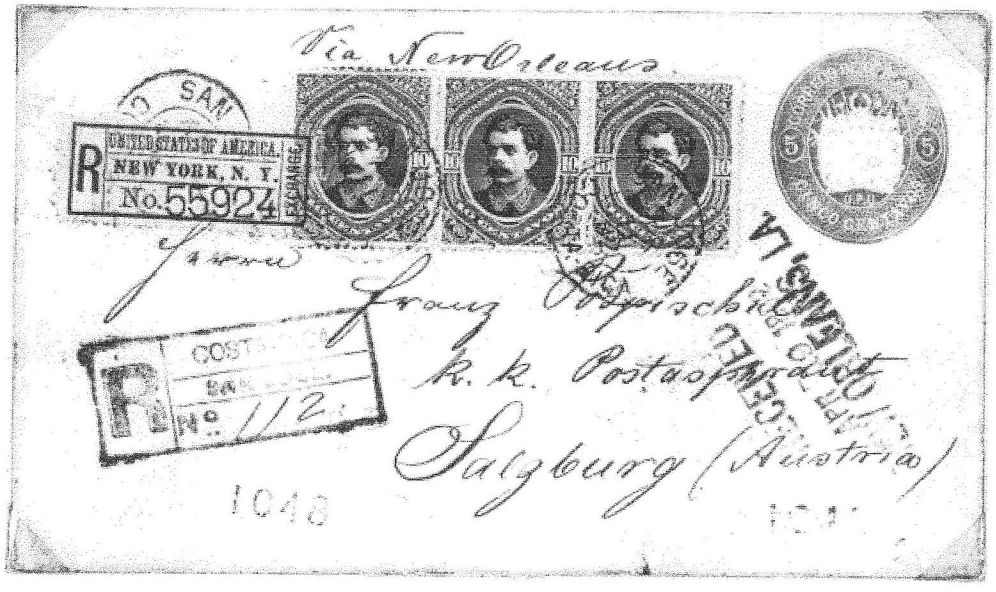


Figure 9.

A typical example of a Costa Rican undeclared "A.R." registered cover (Fig 9) sent San Jose to Salzburg 1892 carries a total franking of 35 centavos which can only be satisfactorily be accounted for by assuming the letter under consideration was in fact a double-weight "A.R." registered letter. Possibly at such an early date, as in Guatemala, the "A.R." service in Costa Rica was also mandatory.

The survival of commercial "A.R." covers from the last century with their related "A.R." forms is unusual unless they were philatelically contrived. A Nicaraguan "A.R." registered cover (Fig 10 a,b) was sent from Bluefields in August 1899 and as is often the case for Central American covers of the period it was not struck with any kind of distinguishing "A.R." postmark. It is only the evidence of the total franking of 25 centavos that suggests it could in fact be an "A.R." item, and it is rather pleasing that the corresponding "A.R." form which in this instance did survive confirms that it truly was an "A.R." letter.

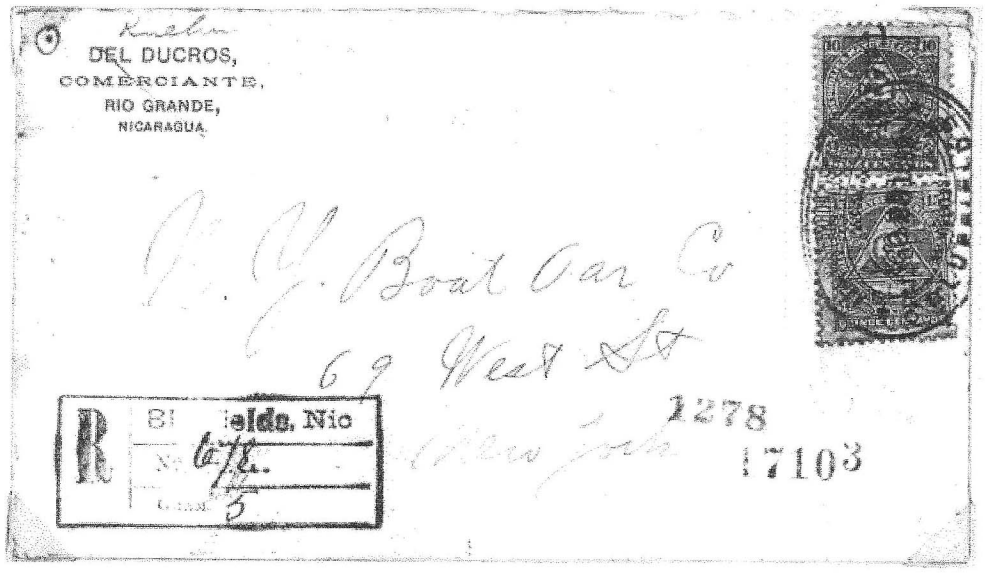


Figure 10a.

Ex Alabama

Agencia Postal Nacional de Nicaragua.

AVISO DE RECEPCION.

(Aviso Récepcion.) 678.

del objeto recomendado registrado con el No. _____ y dirigido al

d' un objet recommandé enregistré sous le No. _____ et adressé à

S. N. Y. Boat Oar Co en New York el 23 Agosto 189 9

M _____ á _____ le _____ 189

El que suscribe declara que l _____ certificad _____

Le soussigne déclare q' un _____ recommandé

con la dirección que se indica arriba N. Y. Boat Oar Co

á l' adresse susmentionée et provenant de Bluefields

le ha sido debidamente entregado

lui a été dûment livré,

el _____ de _____ de 189

le _____ 189

Firma del Destinatario *

Signature du Destinataire **

* ** THE NEW YORK BOAT OAR CO.

☞ Este aviso debe firmarse por el destinatario, ó, si los reglamentos del país del destino lo permiten, por el Jefe de la oficina distribuidora, colocado después en una cubierta y devuelto, bajo recomendación, por primer correo.

☞ Cet avis doit être signé par le destinataire, ou, si les réglements du pays de destination le permettent, par le chef du bureau distributeur, pour être mis sous enveloppe et renvoyé sous recommandation, par le premier courrier.

Remitente Rolando Kuehn

Bluefields

Figure 10b.

Clearly there are many instances of unmarked registered covers that are in fact "A.R." items because of their extra franking. The converse is also possible in that there could be, under certain circumstances, declared "A.R." covers which from the evidence of stamps surviving on cover would seem to have been charged only as ordinary registered items. One possibility is that the "A.R." facility was offered gratis. There is, however, another explanation in that it was not the policy of all republics to add adhesive postage stamps for the supplementary "A.R." service to the envelopes. After joining the UPU in 1879 it was standard policy in Mexico to affix stamps defraying the "A.R." tariff to the related "A.R." forms. Forms rarely survive along with their related letters and most modern collectors presented only with the evidence displayed by "A.R." envelopes carrying the same postage as for ordinary registered letters, and not being appraised of the prevailing postal regulations, would assume that the Mexican Post Office of the period offered a free supplementary "A.R." service. Similarly an "A.R." postal stationery envelope sent from Santa Ana, El Salvador to Austria in 1894 and rated at 20 centavos (fig 11) is under-franked by possibly as much as 6 ctvos since the foreign "A.R." registered postage rate should have been 11 centavos, plus 10 centavos registration and a further 5 centavos for "A.R." service. It would seem in this particular instance, however, the extra stamps were not stuck directly onto the form, but were inadvertently removed at the same time the form was detached.

Figure 11.

Private cachet, struck in red, partly obscured by the New York registry exchange etiquette reads; RECOMMANDÉ/VICTOR GISQUERE,GUATEMALA/(AMERICA CENTRAL)/CERTIFICADO

This has been only a very preliminary survey of international "A.R." registered letters sent from Central America under the auspices of the UPU. It has been very much a personal odyssey into uncharted waters and it is likely that some details, at least, of what have been presented here will need modification in the light of further information. Postal rates at the end of the last century for many Central American republics are generally not that well documented, or if known not readily accessible to modern collectors, and it will probably require the co-operation of aficionados of many areas of Latin American philately to share their unique knowledge so as to build up a more composite picture of how this fascinating and often neglected field of "A.R." registration was fully implemented.

Reprinted from "The Stamp Lover" with the permission of the author and the Editor, Michael Furnell.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR from GIANA WAYMAN

I would like to reply to Dick Saundry's comments on the 15 March 1930 cover. The first flight north took place on 11th and all first flight covers carried on that flight are cancelled on that date. The first flight south took place on 13th and these covers exist in two types. Those with the cachet "EXTRANJERO" (the vast majority) are cancelled on the 11th but have an arrival circular date stamp for the 13th.

Those with the cachet "AMERICA DEL SUR", such as the one illustrated above, were cancelled on the 13th and also have an arrival circular date stamp for the 13th.

The flight back from the Canal Zone through Costa Rica to the United States was on the 15th and would be the first flight on that route. It was not an organised first flight with cachets etc. but someone did prepare a cover for this flight. It is certainly genuine and I think just as interesting.

GUATEMALA: REGISTRY RATES AND MARKINGS

Part 2 (1900-1945) [Continued]

by Cécile Gruson

PROVINCIAL TOWNS

Quezaltenango

1928-30
also Colomba

Colomba

Coban 1928-35

1924-26, also
Pto Barrios (serifed)

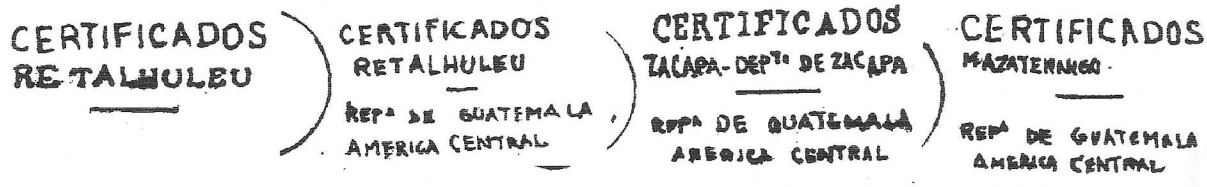
1941-93
manhy offices

c1940

DUPLEXES

1. With bars - tracings from full strikes

2. With lettering - all are incomplete because only part strikes were available from loose stamps.



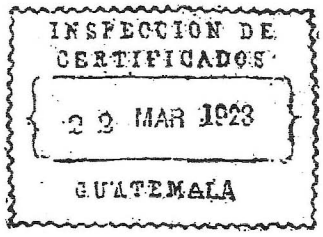
RECEIVING MARKS

1924-25

1931-32

1932-33, also with
LIBRADOR DE VALORES (1936)

INSPECTOR'S DATESTAMPS

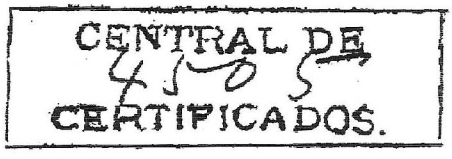


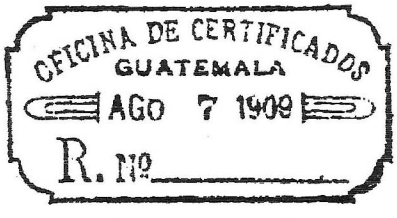
1943-49

REGISTRY BOXES

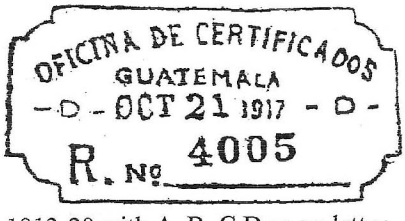
Prior to the 1920's, and except for the dated types, these handstamps were plain and generally without post office name. In the smaller outlying post offices, some of the 19th century registry boxes continued to be used and were only replaced as needed. It is also possible that markings first used in Guatemala City were subsequently handed down to newly opened 3rd or 4th class offices, which had only a marginal need of them.

1908 Xolhuitz



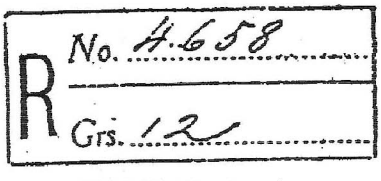


1907-09 in many colours

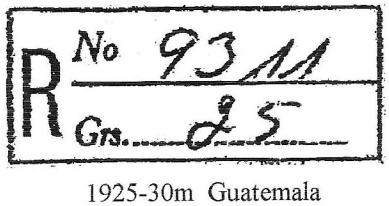


1913-20 with A, B, C,D or no letter
also w/o 'Guatemala' and/or date

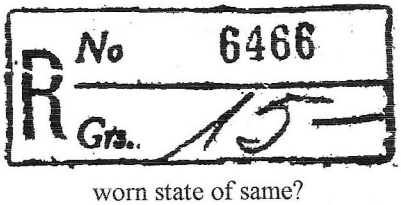
1910, Guatemala, also with 'B'



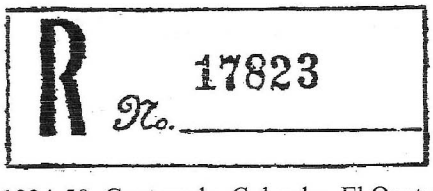
1914-30 Guatemala,
Quezaltenango, Huehuetenango



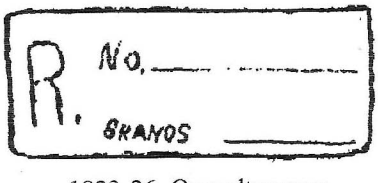
1925-30m Guatemala



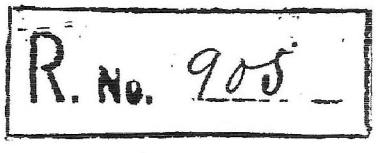
worn state of same?



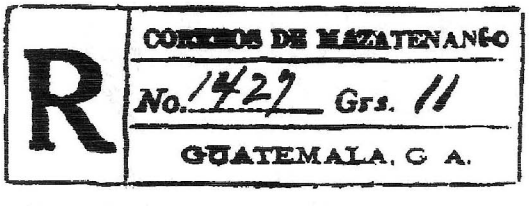
1924-50 Guatemala, Colomba, El Quetzal



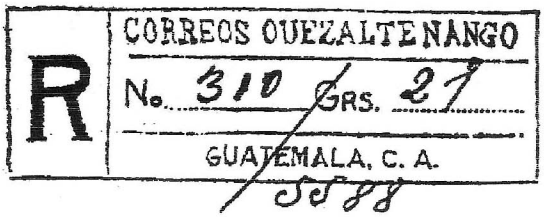
1923-26 Quezaltenango

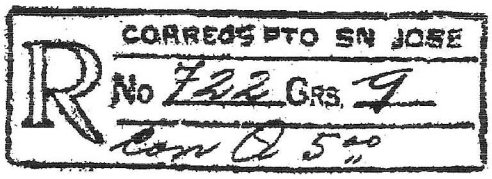


1917 Puerto Barrios

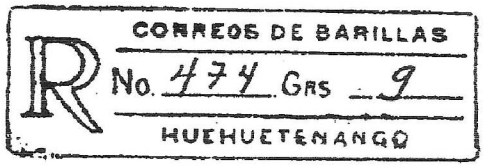


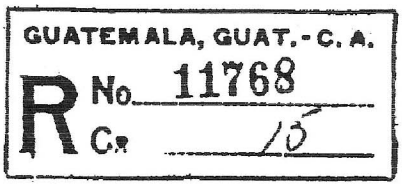
both
1924

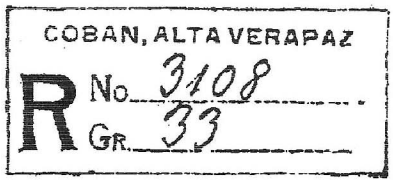


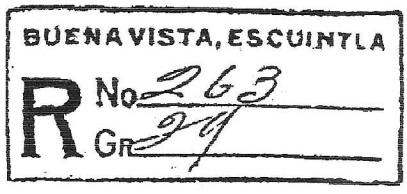


1927-50
Many provincial offices
with and without texts
at bottom

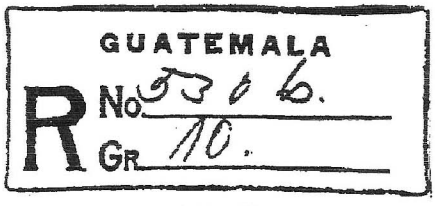




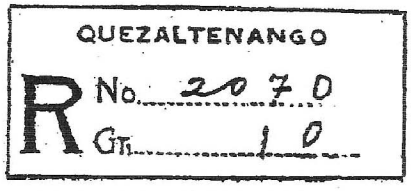




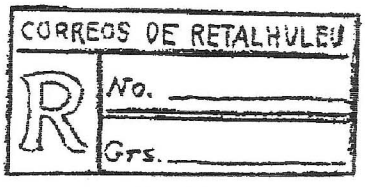
1927-50, many post offices incl. Guatemala. Also RECEPT.DE CERTIF.GUA. (1933) & OFICIAL (1927-30)



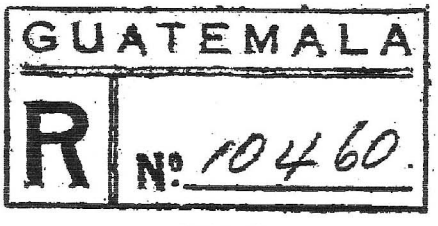
1929-33



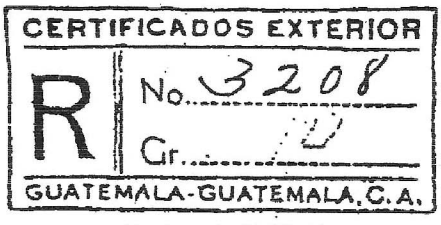
1929-34 also GUATEMALA



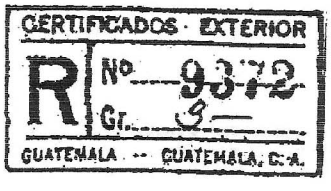
1929-30



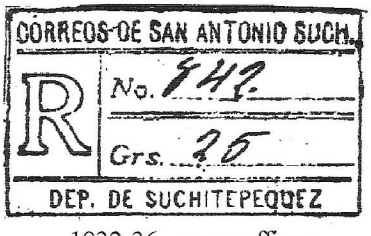
1938-40



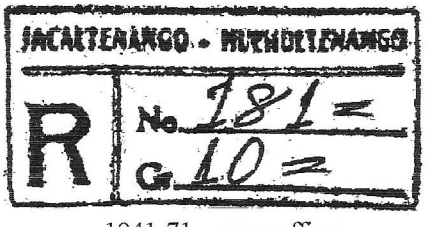
Guatemala 1938-41



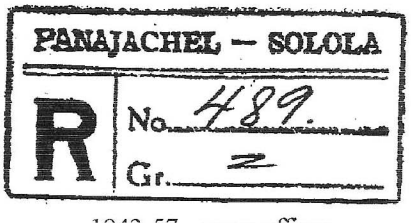
Guatemala 1945-58



1932-36, many offices



1941-71, many offices



1943-57, many offices

ADVICE OF RECEIPT AND MISCELLANEOUS MARKINGS

For the time span considered, all the markings found to date except one were used in Guatemala. Your help is needed to determine what handstamps if any were used in provincial post offices. The "1ª. CITACION" handstamp was applied when first delivery had been unsuccessful with presumably a notification left in the addressee's mailbox to pick it up at the post office.

1927 Guatemala

1929-37 Guatemala

1941 Guatemala

1920 Coban

concluded

NICARAGUA: POSTAL RATES FROM 1913 - Part 2

by MICHAEL P BIRKS FRPSL

In establishing postal rates certain fairly obvious facts must be borne in mind.

- First day covers should always be discounted.
- Stamp dealers rarely franked their mail correctly and unless the rate of a cover fits established rates, it should be discounted.
- Internal official mail required no franking, whilst overseas official mail did: in the latter case rarely was an attempt made to frank correctly. Official mail includes banks. Occasionally official stamps were not available and ordinary adhesives were used.
- On overseas mail i.e. non-Spanish destinations, obligatory tax stamps were not required but were sometimes used incorrectly as part of the franking.
- In the case of multiple use of low value stamps inaccuracies in the calculation are often encountered. Consequently covers are found ± as much as 2 centavos.
- In the early days postage, airmail and R de C were prepaid by separate stamps wherever possible but this practice becomes less accurate as time progresses.
- Whilst Nicaraguan postage stamps were rarely printed with the required rates in mind, surcharges nearly always served a specific rate: an exception would be the 15c surcharge of 1913 used to make the existing 35c value up to the 50c rate.
- Airmail rates provide the greatest minefield and should be treated as "possible" until proved otherwise. There are many facets still to be explored.
- As highlighted by Richard Saundry in his ongoing article on Central American A.R. rates, covers are found with stamps for the A.R. fee and no marking and an A.R. marking with no stamps. Consequently these covers should be treated with a degree of caution.

It can be seen from the above that the establishing of rates is no easy task and is fraught with difficulties. The lack of covers (I could buy a hundred GB covers but four Nicaragua is the biggest bulk lot I have seen at fairs) makes certainty difficult and experience has taught me not to discard what at first appears not to fit. Certainly anomalies do exist, but more often than not covers are eventually explained with a little patience. Hopefully this series of articles will identify many of these anomalies, and I would be pleased to hear from other collectors with additions/conformations of difficult examples.

Dates have proved most difficult. I would welcome earlier and later examples to attempt to establish more accurately periods of usage. I hope at the end of this short series of articles to publish a table of "rates so far established" with dates as accurately pinpointed as possible.

To my knowledge nothing has been published on airmail rates and so this is where the greatest difficulty has lain for me. However I believe I have gone a long way in establishing basic rates for this service and I would welcome details of covers which do not fit my findings.

I have been unable to pinpoint, with any accuracy, the date of the introduction of the Gold Córdoba, and hence the increase in postage rates in 1913. However it must lie between 28 March and 2 June 1913, as evidenced by Figures 1 and 2 below.

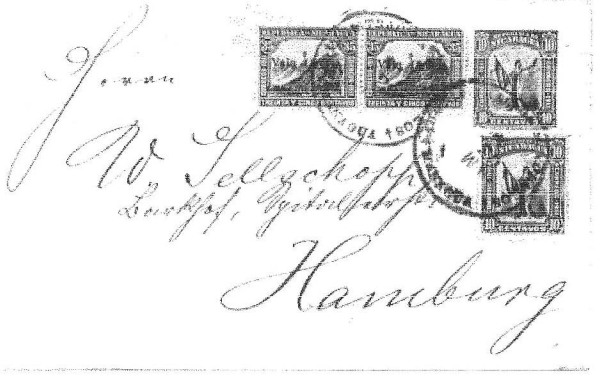


Figure 1 (above). 28 March 1913. Cover to Germany franked 50c de peso.

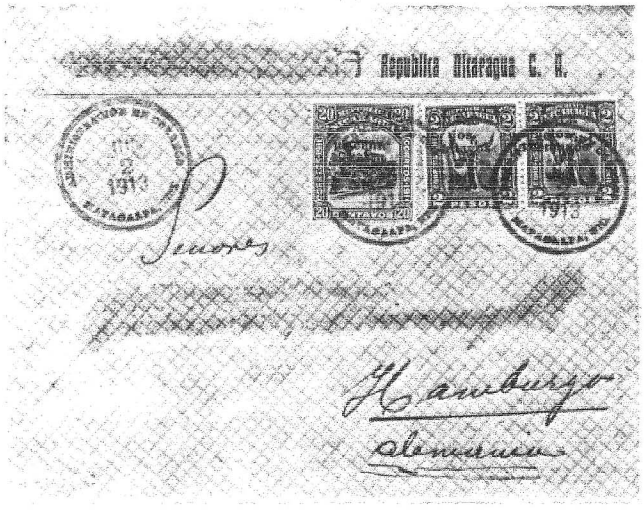


Figure 2 (right). 2 June 1913. Cover to Germany franked 5c de Córdoba.

The overseas rate was raised to 5c per 20g with the introduction of the Gold Córdoba in 1913. There is, however, evidence to suggest that between October 1913 and January 1914 a 4c rate to the United States was in existence. Apart from the earliest and latest covers below shown as Figures 4 and 5, I have seen several others.

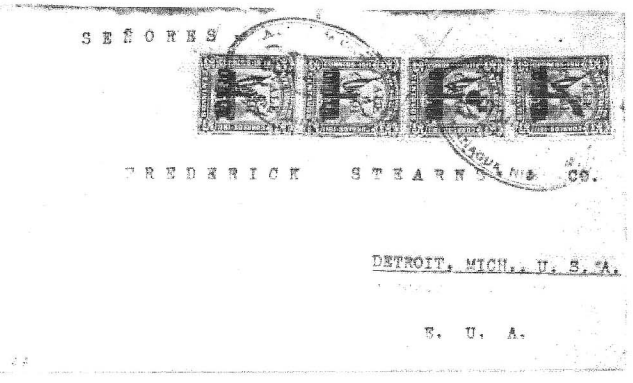


Figure 3 (left). 23 November 1913. A cover franked 5c to the United States.

Figure 4 (above). 8 October 1913. A cover franked 4c to the United States (earliest seen).

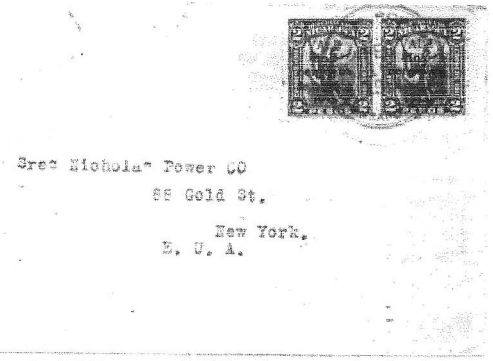


Figure 5 (above) 16 January 1914. A cover franked 4c to the United States (latest seen).

Figure 6 (right) 27 January 1914. A cover franked 5c to the United States.

Around mid 1914 or slightly earlier the pro rata 5c overseas rate was modified. The first 20 grams remained at 5c whilst the next and subsequent 20g were 3c each. Thus a double rate cover became 8c. Whilst I have not seen a simple double rate cover, I can show a double rate registered cover of the period (Figure 7), franked 18c made up of 5c + 3c postage plus 10c registration.

Figure 7. 12 June 1914.
A cover from Managua to Copenhagen.

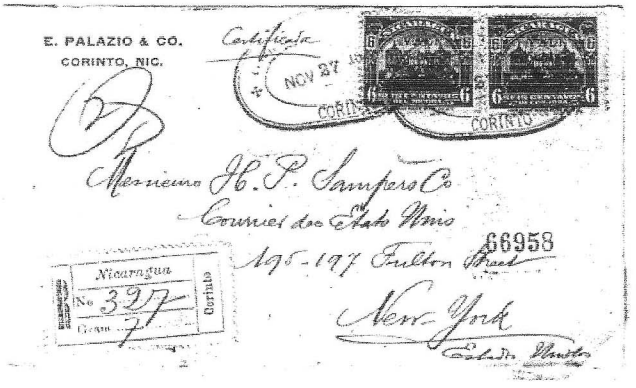


Figure 8. 27 November 1918.
A cover from Corinto to New York

Some time around May/June 1915 the registration fee was reduced from 10c to 5c. Figure 8 shows a 10c registered cover of this period and although not the earliest reported, it is the earliest I can illustrate.

The paucity of internal covers makes the establishing of internal rates significantly more difficult. The internal letter rate for this period is 2c but the registration and AR fees are uncertain. The cover on the left, Figure 9, is franked 7c. Does this mean 2c postage plus 3c registration plus 2c A.R. or 2c postage plus 5c registration plus no stamps affixed for A.R.?

Figure 9 (left). 5 March 1914. a single rate, registered, A.R. cover franked 7 centavos.

An added complication arises with the study of the Bluefields provisionals of 1919 (which fall within this rating period which ends in 1921). Figure 10 shows a cover to the United States rated 2c and figure 11 a similar cover rated 5c. I have no information as to when this 2c rate started but the latest 2c cover, Figure 10, is dated 26 July 1919, whilst the earliest 5c, Figure 11, is dated 10 September 1919.

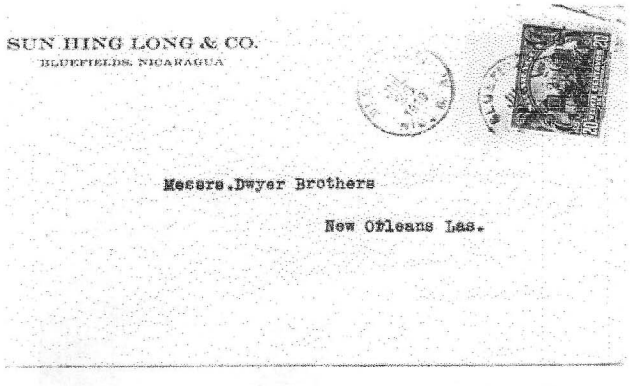


Figure 10. 26 July 1919. 2c cover to the U.S.

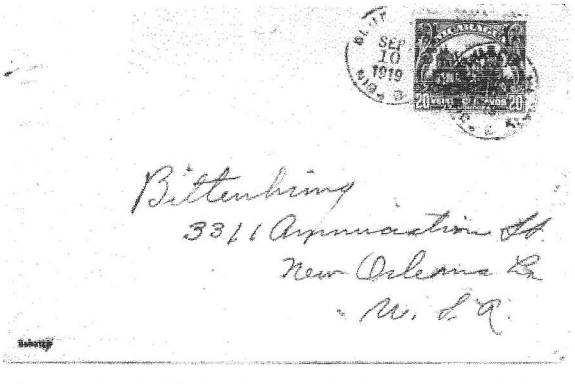


Figure 11. 10 September 1919. 5c cover to the U.S.